

## STUDENT EDITORIAL EXAMPLES

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### **NATIONAL PARKS: ECOLOGY AND ECONOMY**

**By MATTY HACK APRIL 30<sup>th</sup> 2014**

In Northern Maine, Roxanne Quimby — a founder of the skin care company Burt's Bees — is detested by many of her neighbors; "Ban Roxanne" bumper stickers exist. Why the hatred? She and her son want to turn approximately 75,000 acres of Maine wilderness into what would be known as the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Park.

Since the days of Theodore Roosevelt, national parks have been essential to American wildlife conservation. The millions of acres that comprise these parks offer unbroken, natural habitat to countless species of animals, some of which depend almost entirely on them. American bison, for instance, are mostly restricted to a few parks. National parks benefit humans as well. They attract tourists, and tourism is excellent for local economies. The presence of national parks — and tourists — creates more jobs.

Yet many people remain adamantly opposed to the creation of national parks. Some are opposed to government intervention in general, even beneficial intervention. This paranoia is particularly prevalent in Northern Maine, where residents are used to doing what they want with the land. They fear that Katahdin will take away what they see as their right to hunt or snowmobile wherever they want.

Though 75,000 acres is a significant amount of land, the proposed national park would take up less than .4 percent of Maine's 21 million acres, leaving plenty of room for recreation. Additionally, the protection of land is crucial to the survival of imperiled species nationwide. Northern Maine offers among the largest expanses of unbroken American forest habitat east of the Rockies; losing it would be an environmental fiasco. Among the species that call Katahdin home is the Bicknell's thrush — a small, brown songbird that breeds only in the montane forests of the Northeast. Katahdin also offers extensive habitat to the Canada lynx, black bear, spruce grouse and moose, all sparsely populated species for which undisturbed habitat is essential.

For Maine residents more interested in hunting animals than conserving them, there is another incentive to create a national park: the reinvigoration of the local economy. Millinocket, the town closest to Katahdin, has seen better days. Its economy has traditionally centered around logging and paper, but is in desperate need of a new stimulant. The presence of a national park would bring jobs directly related to the park and jobs created by the tourists it attracts. Since Millinocket's population has fallen from 7,742 residents in 1970 to 4,506 in 2010, this sort of boost is desperately needed.

From both an ecological and an economic standpoint, national parks are advantageous to all species, including humans. Not only should Quimby's dream of the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Park come true, but the creation of other national parks should be encouraged whenever possible.

## Spreading Hatred Is Not the Answer

BY ADRIANNA N. MAY 2<sup>nd</sup> 2014

“Cisgender people’s opinions don’t matter in conversations about gender and sexuality.”

“White people have been oppressing people of color for years; they can handle being picked on and having their rights taken away.”

“It’s time for men to realize that females are the dominant sex.”

In the hustle and bustle of moving civil rights forward and spreading tolerance, too many people tend to move backward instead. The above comments were found on social media websites (Facebook, Reddit and Tumblr), written by users from what is frequently viewed as the most accepting demographic: the 18-25-year-old age group, or “Generation X” (“A Portrait of ‘Generation Next’ ”). One would most likely expect a carefree, “let’s all be nice to everyone” attitude from people of this generation, but surprisingly, a large handful of these young adults use hatred of privileged or already widely accepted groups as a means of fueling their own fight for civil rights. Just a few minutes on Tumblr, a popular blogging website, will reveal hundreds of user-written posts encouraging “cisphobia,” or the hatred of people who identify with the gender they were assigned at birth; cisphobia is meant to motivate others to be more accepting of those who are transgender or fluidgender. Other social media users refuse to even talk to males if they are cisgender, heterosexual, white, or all of the above, simply because their opinions have traditionally held the most weight. Some claim that white people should no longer be allowed to hold positions of power, because “it’s time to let people of color have a chance” — a whole new and extreme take on affirmative action (Leonhardt). People who participate in this unusual form of discrimination genuinely believe that they’re helping to eradicate homophobia, transphobia, racism, and other common forms of intolerance. In reality, they’re only expanding the gap between themselves and acceptance by putting themselves in a negative light.

It is contradictory for someone to demand equality while wishing someone else’s rights away. True equality is giving everybody the same rights and the same amount of kindness, regardless of race, sex, gender orientation, sexuality, or culture. Will true equality ever be reached? Right now, we don’t know — but spreading hatred is not the answer.

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*Stories taken from NY TIMES Student Editorial Contest:*

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